



Office Locations:
Beckley, Bridgeport,
Charleston, Morgantown,
Parkersburg, Romney,
Wheeling

WEST VIRGINIA MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP (WEST VIRGINIA MEP) Serving firms throughout West Virginia through seven regional offices. Affiliated with West Virginia University. Contact: Tom Mahoney, 319 Mineral Resources Building, P.O. Box 6070, Morgantown, WV 26506, (304) 293-3800, Fax: (304) 293-6751, Email: director@wvmep.com, Website: <http://www.wvmep.com>

THE MANUFACTURING EXTENSION PARTNERSHIP IN WEST VIRGINIA

Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) is a nationwide system of services and support for smaller manufacturers to become more globally competitive. At the heart of the system is a network of affiliated, locally-based manufacturing extension centers. Each center, like West Virginia MEP, is a partnership, typically involving federal, state, and local governments; industry; educational institutions; and other sources of expertise, information and funding support.

COMPANY CLIPS

Elite Products Reduces Costs to Increase Profitability

Elite Products International, Inc. is a manufacturer of a wide variety of presentation products including dry erase marker boards, easels, communication boards, flip chart sleeves, portable podiums, and electric erasers. The company, which employs less than 20 people, is located in Wheeling, West Virginia and serves markets throughout the world. Elite Products acquires the material for its dry erase marker boards from a variety of suppliers. In an effort to remain competitive, the company decided to look for alternative suppliers that could provide magnetic strips, border trim, and dry erase markers that met current quality standards at a lower cost. Elite Products contacted the West Virginia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (West Virginia MEP) for help identifying a supplier network.

West Virginia MEP developed brief written functional specifications, which defined material, finish, production quantity, delivery period, packaging and shipping requirements, and critical tolerances and dimensions. Once West Virginia MEP compiled this information, the organization developed a list of prospective companies and issued a formal request for quotation to each one. As Elite Products received the quotations, West Virginia MEP placed them into a spreadsheet that compared each company by the required specifications.

Elite reviewed all the quotes and the comparative spreadsheet after the collection phase was completed. After reviewing the information, West Virginia MEP requested product samples from the companies selected by Elite. West Virginia MEP then gathered these samples and delivered them to Elite for testing and qualification. After evaluation, Elite found a supplier willing to provide high quality goods and was able to reduce the cost of manufacturing white boards by 25 percent, increasing profits by 10 percent.

Continued

STATE STATS

DATA* COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Number of projects completed with firms	121
Number of firms served	99
Number of firms served for the first time	57
Federal cost share for current operating year	\$338,300
State/other cost share for current operating year	\$676,600

**Data as reported from center*

DATA** COVERS JANUARY TO DECEMBER 2001

Increased sales & retained sales	\$3,831,000
Client capital investment	\$3,932,600
Total cost savings	\$322,800
Jobs (created & retained)	41

***Source: Independent client impact survey*



Noise Reductions Create a Sound Workplace at Halltown Paperboard

Halltown Paperboard, a recycled paper manufacturing company, is located in Halltown, West Virginia, and has 230 employees. The Halltown plant manufactures paperboard from pulp made of recycled paper products. The company's paperboard products are distributed worldwide and are used in producing cereal boxes, monopoly game boards, and cigarette cartons, to name a few uses.

Halltown Paperboard contacted the West Virginia Manufacturing Extension Partnership (West Virginia MEP) to request a baseline sound survey of its Halltown plant. This survey provides information to the company's engineering department so it can implement engineering controls in plant areas where employees are exposed to high noise levels. West Virginia MEP conducted a four-day baseline sound evaluation, consisting of 34 samples from the entire facility. It prepared and presented a final report to Halltown Paperboard's management, identifying employees' eight-hour, time-weighted average exposure to sound and engineering/ administrative controls for noise abatement, specifically around the #2 Paperboard Machine Line. West Virginia MEP also recommended additional controls and changes that would reduce sound levels in other areas of the facility.

With West Virginia MEP's assistance, Halltown's engineering department was able to reduce employee exposure to excessive noise. Additionally, West Virginia MEP involvement allowed Halltown to meet the strict requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) occupational noise exposure standard.